

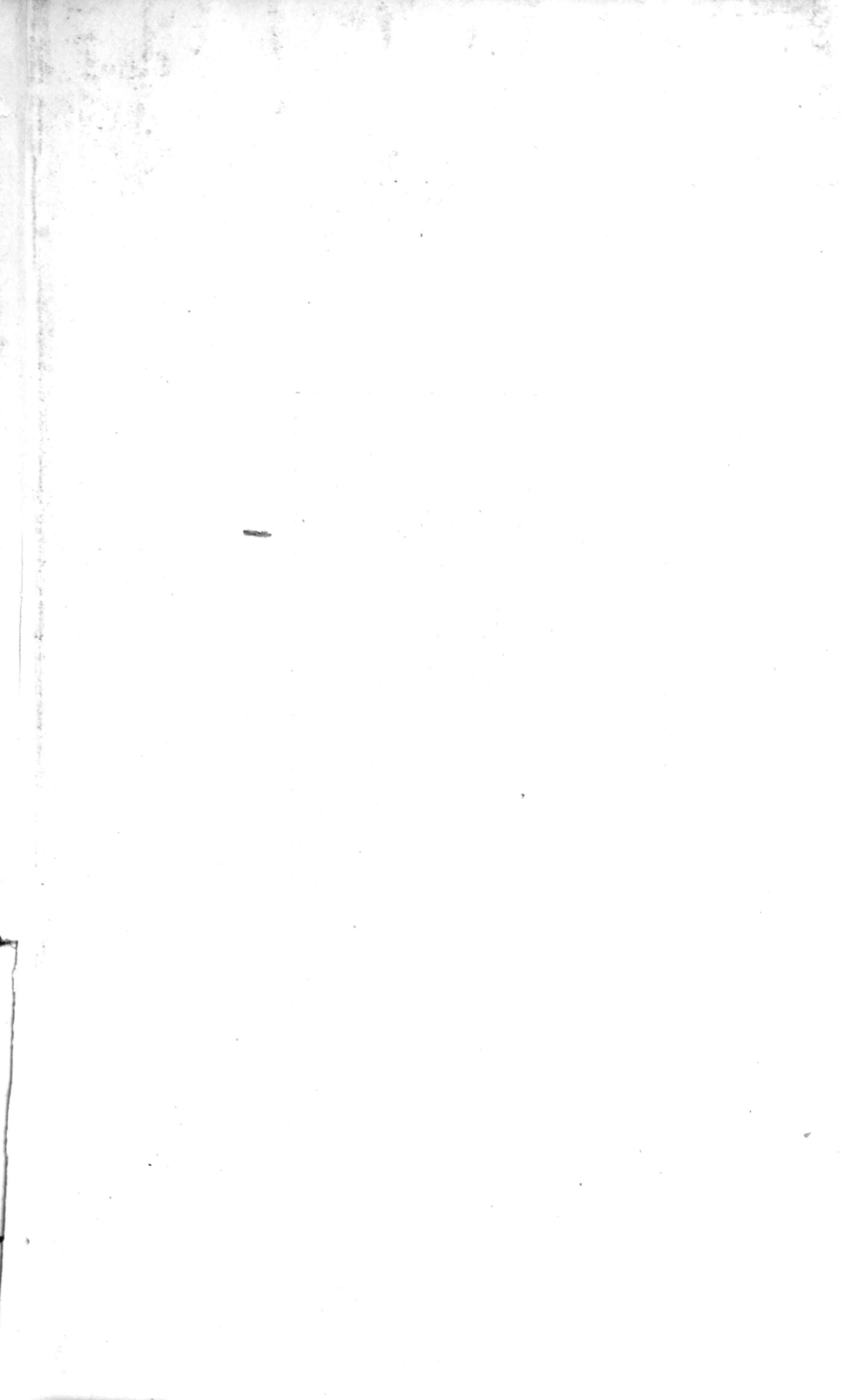
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# THE NEGRO'S PLACE IN THE NEW RECONSTRUCTION

By KELLY MILLER

## MORAL REVOLUTION

The inherent rights of man receive emphasis and new assertion at moments of social stress and strain. When society is in travail, liberty is born. During the long eras of leisure, the spirit of liberty languishes. Existing order is transformed, and all things made new amidst the fire and smoke of revolution. In times of quietude and peace, social evils accumulate and crystallize. The acquisition of wealth and the attainment of culture and refinement constitute the goal of endeavor. Discontent is decried and the soul seeks its ease. The voice of the reformer is denounced as tending to disturb social placidity and repose. The troublesome issues of the rights of man are banished from consciousness. Inequalities arise, aristocratic prerogative is asserted, and divine sanction assumed as the ordained scheme of social adjustment. When reform becomes impossible, revolution becomes imperative. It requires periodic upheavals to startle the soul from its complaisant slumber, discredit the dominance of material aims, frustrate the assumption of arrogance and pride, and vindicate the rights of man as the highest attainable human value.

History abounds in convulsive epochs when the acute evils of society are eradicated. We have but to recall the tremendous outburst of moral energy during the Revolutionary Struggle and the Civil War, to bring to mind the operation of this principle within our own national experience. Each of these great upheavals served to curb the arrogant assumption of irresponsible power, and to give impulse to the doctrine of the inherent claims of man as man. The titanic struggle, which has just engulfed the whole world in red ruin of revolution, is but another act in the drama of human liberation, and the uplifted curtain shall fall on a world transformed.

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## REVOLUTIONS NEVER GO BACKWARD.

Revolutions never go backward. When a nation puts its hands to the plow of liberty, although it might wistfully reverse its vision, yet the furrow which marks the forward path can never be effaced. Revolutions always lessen the domain of oppression and increase the area of liberty. By the inexorable logic of events, the poor and oppressed receive the chief benefits of these great movements of history. The world convulsions precipitate the showers of liberty whose droppings fall upon the needy and neglected of the children of men. The despised Jew of Europe, the oppressed millions of Asia, the Negro in Africa and America, and the under-man throughout the world will be the beneficiaries of the blessings which flow from the greatest epoch in the history of social evolution.

## POWER AND PRINCIPLE.

The fundamental issue involved in this struggle is but the consummation of the age-long struggle between power and principle. The Central Powers, under the compulsion of Germany, espoused the ancient dogma of the dominance of power and the divine right of the strong. Through their ruthless acts, which spoke louder than their arrogant words, they defiantly declared that the weak has no rights which the strong is bound to respect. When the Belgian border was crossed, the die was cast. The Allies were forced, willingly or otherwise, to accept the challenge. Right and might once more met in open conflict. There is in the human heart a deep seated conviction of the indomitability of right. The universal and spontaneous response to this appeal confirms the same conviction. Power may seem to triumph for a while; might may be enthroned while right is enchained; but final defeat is never accepted until the verdict is reversed, and right is crowned victor. If it appears that God is on the side of the heaviest battalion, a deeper insight and closer scrutiny reveal the fact that ultimately the heaviest battalion gets itself arrayed on the side of **right**. Power may put on efficiency and seem to work wonders for a while, but conscienceless efficiency is no match for efficiency quickened by conscience. The victorious outcome of this titanic struggle has given to the cause of right a sanction that

can never again be shaken. The inviolability of the rights of man has become a sacred principle for all time to come.

### THE OVERRULING PURPOSE.

Shakespeare was not uttering thread-bare theological dogma, when he declared that "there is a divinity which shapes our ends." This belief is in harmony with universal human experience. No statesman or philosopher was able to foresee or guide the trend of events during these five foregone fateful years. The wise statesmen have but followed the flow of events. The foolish tried to stem the tide. Men and nations have been moved, as it were, by an unseen hand, as pawns upon the chess board of the world. Those who were at first impelled by the traditional motives of greed, ambition, animosity and revenge, have been led to a broader vision as the involved purpose of the great drama was unfolded. If there have been hesitation, indecision, and revised or substituted statements of the objects and aims of the war, it has been only in proportion as a constantly clarifying vision has been vouchsafed to those who were sincerely seeking after the right way, if haply they might find it. The wrath of man has been made to serve the great consummation, and the remainder of wrath has been held in restraint. The offense must needs come, but woe unto that man or nation by whom it cometh. The Serbian assassin of an Austrian Prince fired the shot that shocked the world. But we have already forgotten the name of prince and assassin, in the momentous results which transcended the part which these unwitting participants were made to play. The little fire kindleth a great matter, when the fuel has already been accumulated for the flame. This tragedy was but the exciting occasion of a deep seated cause. The idle gust overtopples the giant oak only when the foundation has already been undermined. The fulness of time had come. The world was ripe for a great moral revolution. The rapid scientific and material advancement had outrun ethical restraint. Culture had supplanted conscience. Deeds had become glorified over ideals; the thing counted for more than the thought. Success meant more than righteousness. The rights of the weak were subordinated to the interests of the strong. Religion had be-

come silent in the face of wrong. The church with pious cant continued to repeat archaic phraseology, while the world plunged headlong into sin.

## THE FAILURE OF PROPHECY

It is a sad commentary on the human understanding that the so-called wise men and seers of the time were proclaiming the era of universal peace and the end of war, at the moment when the world was on the edge of a precipice. Their eyes were holden, so that they could not discern the signs of the times nor see the shadow of coming events. They proceeded in the even tenor of their satisfied way. Moral maxims were mouthed without moral meaning. The church preached a luke-warm gospel and a tepid righteousness that had reconciled itself with arrogance of class and prejudice of race. It attempted the forbidden role of trying to serve God and Mammon. The moral deluge engulfed the complaisant world with suddenness and shock as completely as the Mosaic flood startled and overwhelmed the convivial devotees in the days of Noah. The foundation was suddenly swept away by that hand which rules over events and brings to naught the purposes of man. The highest human wisdom has little predictive value. We can with no greater assurance foretell what the next five years will bring forth, than in nineteen fourteen, we could predict the momentous movements of the intervening quinquennium. Czar and Kaiser, King and Mikado, Sultan and President, were made to play their assigned parts. The Kaiser of the Germans may be considered the Pharaoh of modern times, whose heart had been hardened, in order that the dominance of right over might might be vindicated anew. The voice spoke through the mouth-piece of the Allies to the heart-hardened leader of the hosts of oppression, saying, "Let my people go." The horse and rider have been overthrown in the Red Sea of destruction, as a modern reminder to kings and nations of the fate of those who would stand between the people and liberty which is their due.

## A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE

It is not necessary to invoke the doctrine of perfection, in order to justify the part which the Allies are playing in



this great issue. A righteous cause may be better than any man or nation involved in it. An evil propaganda may be worse than its most wicked advocate. Christianity, in nineteen hundred years, has not yet produced a single Christian according to the rigid exactions of the cult. Nor has the kingdom of evil produced a single unmitigated devil. The modern crusade of liberty is better than any allied nation which espoused it. The doctrine of oppression is more detestable than its most wicked adherent. Not one of the allied nations could pose as model of the virtue which it espoused, not yet claim freedom from the evil practices which were so bitterly denounced in the adversary. A nation without sin cannot be found to cast the first stone. In the readjustment of historical wrongs of nation against nation and race against race, the victorious Allies will be forced by considerations of prudence to choose a comparatively recent date as point of departure, to save themselves from serious embarrassment. In order to make ourselves worthy devotees of a righteous cause it is not necessary that we should be free from sin but that we acknowledge our sin, and promise to do so no more. Any nation that enlists in the crusade of humanity with vain glorious assumptions of self-righteousness thereby proclaims its own insincerity. They who would prepare themselves for vicarious and sacrificial service, must first submit themselves to serious self-searching with deep humiliation and contrition of soul. Abraham Lincoln was the one commanding moral genius that has arisen in the Western hemisphere. He followed the leading of the inner light. He heard and heeded the call, and accepted the commission to lead the unrighteous hosts in behalf of righteousness. But he was all the while deeply conscious of our national unworthiness, and accepted the chastening hand of affliction with a groaning of spirit that was too deep for utterance. In an outburst of moral anguish, he exclaims: "Yet if God wills that it (the war) continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" The vital difference

between the Central Powers and the Allies, all of whom had fallen far short of the standard of national rectitude, consisted in the fact that the Allies stood ready to acknowledge their faults and prayed forgiveness as moral preparation for the great contest. On the other hand, the Germans valued the discarded methods which the Allies repudiated. They had the foolish hardihood to justify their misdeeds as a part of their code of national morality. Great indeed is the condemnation of that man or nation who breaks the moral law and justifies its transgression. A nation cannot wait until it has become perfect before espousing right ideals. But a declaration of high purpose arouses the conscience and reacts upon the conduct. Nations, like individuals, rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things. But all moral progress is estopped when misdeeds are justified. The American people were not in favor of the emancipation of the slave when they entered upon the Civil War. England was not committed to the doctrine of world democracy when she joined hands with Russia, the most autocratic state in Europe, to protect a violated treaty. But just as the battle-cry of freedom soon became the dominant motive in our Civil War, so the World War had not progressed far before it became imperative that the allied cause be impelled by the dynamic power of a moral watch-word. To Woodrow Wilson was vouchsafed the high privilege of uttering this word. All the nations of the world have been made nobler and worthier by reason of the righteous doctrine which they have espoused and extolled. Never again can the weak peoples of the world be ruthlessly over-ridden by arrogant power. The United States has assumed the world's spokesmanship for the doctrine of human liberty. Never again can the American Negro be dealt with in ruthless disregard of this declared doctrine without discrediting our righteous advocacy and making our high pretensions of non-effect.

### THE POWER OF RIGHT DOCTRINE.

Historic epochs enounce dynamic doctrines surcharged with pent-up revolutionary power. These doctrines epitomize and express the oppressive burden under which the people have been laboring and embody their ideals of relief. The doctrine

is more than the deed. The thought precedes the thing. The issues of life flow from the fountain-head of thought and belief. The Christian church, not unwisely, emphasizes the supreme importance of orthodox belief, which serves as the standard by which right conduct is regulated and controlled. If the people's ideals are right, their conduct cannot be wrong. If the people's ideals are wrong, their conduct cannot be right. A pure fountain cannot send forth a corrupt stream. The world is ruled by opinion. Revolutions always emphasize the right opinion concerning human liberty and the equality of man. "Liberty, fraternity, equality"; "all men are created equal"; "no distinction on account of race and color," are maxims which epitomize the outcome of the three great social revolutions of modern times. These maxims have become axioms and are appealed to as self-evident principles in all subsequent social progress. Revolutionary fervor heats the thermometer of public sentiment many degrees beyond its normal registry. Great truths are uttered by the entranced prophets of reform which transcend the calculated and cautious judgment of calm and quiet reflection. Like the enraptured apostle on the Mount, they utter words of marvelous wisdom, though they wist not what they say. The moral watchword of the French Revolution was principally intended for Frenchmen who were oppressed beneath the heavy heel of haughty autocracy. The author of the Declaration of Independence was a slave-holder, and must have penned that immortal document with serious reservation of mind or disquietude of conscience. The abolition of race and color in civil and political procedure marks the most daring concrete application of this abstract philosophy of human rights to which this doctrine has yet been subjected. The world is still amazed at the moral audacity of the great apostles of human liberty who made the despised Negro a citizen and clothed him with political and civil prerogative and power.

#### THE INHERENT TRUTH OF SOUND DOCTRINE

The value of doctrine does not depend upon its interpretation by the one who first uttered it, but rather upon the meaning which it suggests and the response which it evokes in the minds of those who receive it. The telling sermon de-

pend upon the meaning which the minister imputes to his text. Shakespeare, who fathomed the depths of human thoughts and feelings, was incapable of profound intellectual or moral convictions. His maxims of wisdom were called forth to meet the requirements of mimic art. We read into his words a profundity of thought and meaning of which the author never dreamed. A word once uttered can never be recalled. He who sends it forth cannot retract or limit its meaning and interpretation to his narrow interest or intentment. The early apostles of Christianity were profoundly impressed with the conviction that the gospel dispensation was limited to the Jewish race. It required a divine revelation to convince its chief spokesman of its higher intent and purpose to embrace all mankind. Universal truth enforces universal application, despite the narrow judgment of men who may not be able to see beyond the circle of their own circumstances. The story runs, that a colored citizen of a southern state became sorely perplexed as to a practical definition of the word "democracy," which had recently become current in the discussion of the issues of the day. The dictionaries at his disposal furnished no satisfactory relief from his dilemma, in view of the proscriptive civil and political policy of which he was made to bear the brunt. In the midst of his bewilderment he decided to write to his senator, who is far-famed for his reactionary attitude towards the manhood rights of the Negro race. This distinguished senator, not knowing that the request came from a colored constituent replied: "Democracy means that you are as good as I am." He was thus beguiled into telling the truth, which no subsequent qualification can affect, though he may expostulate until the day of judgment.

### WORLD DEMOCRACY

Democracy for the world, and the world for democracy, has become the keyword of the convulsive struggle in which the nations and races of mankind are involved. This instantly appeals to the moral energy of those who labor and are heavy laden in all the ends of the earth. It is needless to speculate as to what reservations of thought or qualifications of judgment lay in the mind of the statesman who first gave utterance



to this expression, or to point out inconsistency between word and deed. It is more important to know that those who stand in need of the beneficence of the great truth hear it gladly. All races, colors and creeds have fought under the inspiration of its banner. It has become the battle-cry of those who yearn for freedom, the tidings of great joy for those who sit in the shadow of arrogance and power.

### DIVINE RIGHT

The dominance of power over weakness was the only sanction that primitive man needed for his over-lordship among his feebler fellows. As soon as the troublesome qualms of conscience emerged, they were assuaged by assumption of divine right. All of the historical evils of nations against nation, and race against race, and class against class have sought justification on this ground. The overbearing attitude of the Germans toward the other nations of Europe was based primarily upon might backed up by assumed divine sanction. Because this nation had reached certain superior attainments, it asserted the right to impose its imperious will upon others without let or hindrance. The arguments which the German apologists used to justify their conduct towards other European nations are paralleled in every particular by the assertions of the anti-Negro propagandists in the United States, who would hold the Negro in everlasting subordination to the white race. One distinguished German philosopher declares:

"As the German bird, the eagle, hovers high over all the creatures of the earth, so also should the German feel that he is raised high above all other nations who surround him, and whom he sees in the limitless depths beneath him."

Another tells us:

"One single highly cultured German warrior, of those who are, alas! falling in thousands, represents a higher intellectual and moral life-value than hundreds of the raw children of nature whom England and France, Russia and Italy, oppose to them."

With the proper substitution of terms, these citations might be adopted bodily by those American publicists who believe

that God has appointed the Negro an inferior place in his all-wise scheme of things. It was but logical that the German nation should raise the race issue in the world conflict. They first appealed to England on the basis of a common Teutonic blood to refrain from entering the conflict in behalf of the inferior Celts and Slavs. The invited participation of the yellow and black races was reprobated as the crowning act of apostasy against the ordained superiority of the white race. It is interesting to note that a certain type of southern opinion which is wedded to the divine theory of race relationship agreed with the German point of view, and denounced the enlistment of the black and yellow races to fight against the lordly white race as a crime against humanity.

### DEEP SEATED EVILS

There are certain evils which get themselves so firmly lodged in the human mind that they can be eliminated only by shot and shell. Men at one time sincerely and honestly believed in the right of the strong to own the weak, as master and slave, especially if the strong man were white and the weak one black. This doctrine was shot to death at Appomattox. The last important public utterance of Senator Benjamin R. Tillman, the oracle of a certain school of opinion, was to the effect that he was glad that the Civil War was resolved in favor of the Union, and that the Negro was made free. The mind of the defeated reactionary gives its tardy assent to the righteous judgment enforced by the sword. The German people sincerely believed in the divine right of kings and of the German nation. But this doctrine received its death wound at the battle of the Marne. Enlightened German opinion will soon express gratification that the World War was resolved in favor of the Allies, and that the detested doctrine of divine right of kings and nations has been shot out of the minds of men forever. It is the lost cause that never can be revived. The anti-slavery advocates used to declare that whenever a practice became too despicable for human responsibility, it sought vindication under the shelter of divine sanction. It is noticeable that those who assume familiarity with divine intendment, exhibit least of the divine spirit in dealing with their fellow-men. To suppose that there could be any trace-

able connection between an All-wise and All-Good Providence and the workings of the minds of those who have been loudest in denying the inalienable rights of man, on both sides of the Atlantic, would reverse all our received notions of the divine attributes.

### THE DIVINE RIGHT OF RACE

But along with the divine right of kings must go every other semblance of divine right, including divine right of race. There is no more reason to suppose that God has chosen the white race to exercise lordship over the darker races of men than that he had chosen the Germans to lord it over the other European nations. There exists in the minds of many the deep-seated opinion that the white race has some God-ordained mission to which the weaker breeds must bow in humble submission. Rudyard Kipling's "White Man's Burden" is but the modern refrain of the exploded conceit that God has given his chosen race the heathen for their possession to be broken to pieces with a rod of iron. The divine right of kings is a more acceptable doctrine than the divine right of race. It is more consoling to be required to submit to one ruler of divine designation than to be compelled to bow in subjection to a whole race of persons so designed. Most of the unjust and unrighteous discriminatory regulations against the Negro are based upon the assumed or implied superior claim of the white race. Wherever and whenever the white man is accorded a single advantage because he is white and the Negro subjected to a single disadvantage because he is black, it represents a discrimination without any reasonable justification, human or divine. A social fabric built upon this basis rests upon the foundation of sand which will surely be shaken down when the wind and rain of democracy blow and beat upon it; and great will be the fall thereof.

### KINSHIP IN INIQUITY

The advocates of race discrimination are spiritual descendants of the defenders of human slavery, who in turn bear close kinship of spirit with the Germans who believe in the divine right of kings. It is a tragedy to see men of genius prostituting their power on the side of human oppression instead of liberty. The most tragic chapter in history is the

collapse of the Germans, the most highly favored of nations. They misjudged their mission and misapplied their powers. It will never again be possible for the black man and the yellow man, who fought side by side with the better element of the white race against the outrageous pretensions of the minor and meaner fraction, to believe that color confers any divine favor. By what possible process of logic can it be claimed that one-third of the human race, because it happens to be white, should exercise lordship forever over two-thirds which happens to be colored?

### NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Some individuals, some nations and some races have present advantages over other individuals, nations and races. If there is any divine attribute to whose appeal the human conscience responds, it requires that the strong should encourage and strengthen the weak, and not aggrandize their own conceit at the expense of those more helpless and hapless than themselves. Germany might have uplifted the whole human race to a higher level of science and achievement, had she chosen the way of liberty rather than oppression. The strong will fulfill their mission in the world by playing the role of the big brother rather than that of the big bully. The divine right of kings, the divine right of race, the divine right of class, the divine right of power must go the way of all wicked and detestable dogmas. The only divine right that will be acceptable to a democratic world is the divine right of each individual to make the most of himself.

### RACE PREJUDICE

Human history abounds in deep and bitter political, religious and social animosities. The dawn of history breaks upon a world at war. Society like nature has been red in tooth and claw. The ape and tiger have had little time to slumber. But race prejudice, as it is understood in the world today, is the product of comparatively modern times. It has sprung up during the past four hundred years, since the Western European has forced himself upon the weaker breeds of man in all parts of the world. Ancient literature contains little or nothing of this form of race prejudice, under which eligibility



is based upon flesh and blood rather than upon mind and spirit. The Germanic races are more seriously afflicted with this idolatry of blood than those of Latin or Slavonic origin. The Latin races have had as wide and varied contact with weaker peoples as the Teuton or his Anglo-Saxon cousin. But the Latin dispensation, despite its manifested imperfections, has never sown the seeds of race hatred in the portions of the world where its power held sway. In South America and in the West Indian Archipelago where the Latin blood and authority dominated for centuries, the people live and move in racial peace and good will. But in the Teuton cult, color is more than creed, race counts for more than religion. The Negro in France may rise to the level of his talent or genius in the civil, social or military life, but race intolerance among the Germanic races would restrict his aspiration on the mere ground of race and color. A Negro soldier might rise to superior command in the French army, but should a Negro possess the military genius of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon combined into one, he could not rise above a designated level in the armies regulated by this restrictive spirit. Some one has written a book entitled "If Christ came to Congress," and pointed out the strange contradiction which He would witness among those who profess to follow in His footsteps. But should the Man of Sorrows return to earth under the similitude of a man of color, in many parts of the world, He would be denied communion with the saints in His own church which He died to establish; or at most, restricted to spiritual relationship with those of His own assumed complexion.

#### AN ANOMALY

It is one of the curious anomalies of history that in the recent world war the climax of bitterness was reached between German and Anglo-Saxon of kindred blood and spirit. The German nation translates its doctrine of intolerance into logical and unmitigated action. The Anglo-Saxon rose up in his might to defeat the logical conclusion of his own intolerant attitude. His good sense has redeemed his bad logic. The spirit of intolerance based on race and blood has received a shock at the hand of its own adherents from which it can never recover. Italy, Spain, France and Russia and the Balkan

States do not show the same aversion of race as the Teuton and the Saxon. The Saxon who is but a Teuton of diluted blood is better than the Teuton. Some Saxons are better than others. Race aversion whose stubbornness and strength override considerations of conscience does not characterise the entire white race, but only a lesser fraction of that race. Of these the Germanic element is the dominating force of the world today. But this tough Teutonic intolerant spirit must yield by attrition with the milder and more human disposition of the great majority of the human race whether European, Asiatic or African. For the first time in the history of the world, all elements of the European peoples have come into council with representatives of other races and colors to deliberate upon the fate of the world. This council will be brought to naught unless it is based upon the underlying principles of the brotherhood of man. The Japanese, the foremost section of the Asiatic peoples, are now speaking with authority for the yellow races. They have already put the world on warning that the intolerant spirit of the more arrogant portion of the white race can never be accepted as the final basis of peace on earth and good will among men. Race prejudice is the greatest evil that afflicts the world today. Animosities growing out of greed, religious schisms, and political ambition may be made amenable to reason or force. Those who foster race hatred are defeating the millenium of world civilization, whatever form of value their contributions to human culture may take. What profit is it to gain the whole world at the expense of the soul? German efficiency dwindles in importance when weighed against her accompanying arrogance and intolerance of spirit. Unless the higher soul values shall be universally recognized as transcending the intolerant exactions of flesh and blood, the moral unity of mankind cannot be attained, the devoutly hoped for brotherhood of man is a delusive dream, and Jesus Christ, as Saviour of the world, has lived and died in vain.

### MORAL CONSISTENCY

The Allied Nations will be bound in ethical consistency to live up to the doctrines which they espoused to meet the great moral emergency. All permanent progress depends

upon the stability of law. The Saviour tells us: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." This is characteristic of all universal law, whether spiritual or scientific. It is independent of time and place. This is true of the multiplication table. It cannot be varied or modified to satisfy human arrogance or pride. Great indeed is the condemnation of that one who violates law and justifies the violation. The business man who would misapply the multiplication table in his dealings and justify his conduct, must be placed under drastic penalty, or else our economic fabric would fall. When the German nation would ruthlessly destroy weaker nations for its own aggrandizement and justify the destruction, it was establishing a new code of morality which must not be allowed, lest civilization be imperiled. There cannot be one law for the weak and another for the strong, or one law for black men and another for white men. The ethical principles have no respect for geographical latitudes nor for the conventional pride of men or nations. What is wrong in Germany, is equally wrong in Georgia. Atrocities in Texas and atrocities in Turkey call for like condemnation. The United States, as sponsor for the moral issue upon which the world struggle is waged, will be bound to treat all of its citizens with the equal justice which it is now proclaiming as the saving doctrine for the world. This nation cannot longer permit its own Constitution to be violated with impunity, while insisting that other nations shall observe the letter and spirit of international law. It must practice and inculcate the principles of justice and equality at home, as preparation to serve as moral monitor of mankind.

### RECONSTRUCTION OF THOUGHT

The only reconstruction worth while is a reconstruction of thought. Permanent reforms grow out of a change in the attitude of mind. The weaker element is always governed by the attitude of the stronger. Programs proceed from principles. As long as man looked upon woman as a plaything and a toy, she was a nullity in the state. But in proportion as his more enlightened view leads him to regard her as a co-equal in the equation of life, she will be accorded a larger and larger

measure of privilege and prerogative. The Negro was at first regarded as representing an inferior order of creation, fit only for drudgery and rough toil. Under the dominance of this idea, he was made a slave. So long as this notion prevailed, he could hope for no other status. But when it began to dawn that he was a man, with all the involved potentialities of manhood, his captors began to become unquiet concerning the inhuman treatment heaped upon him.

The anti-slavery struggle resulted in profoundly changing the attitude of the people toward the Negro race, which finally resulted in emancipation. Chief Justice Taney's name has been damned to everlasting fame by a single sentence that failed to synchronize with the sentiment of the nation at the time it was uttered. The institution of slavery rested upon the foundation of the dogma that the Negro had no rights that a white man was bound to respect. The leaven of the Declaration of Independence and the anti-slavery propagandists had wrought a great change in public sentiment concerning the place and function of the Negro. It was in view of this altered attitude of mind that the Negro was set free and clothed with the prerogative of citizenship. As the American mind began to grow cold and indifferent on this issue, a strong sentiment was arising which demanded the annulment or abolition of the reconstruction amendments to the Federal Constitution. But at this juncture the World's War was precipitated, which re-emphasized the doctrine of the rights of man. The gallant part which the Negro played in bringing victory to the side of liberty has also served to liberalize the feeling and sentiment in his behalf. The new reconstruction, therefore, in so far as it may effect the Negro, will grow out of this new attitude of mind. According to the present state of sentiment, the Negro has some rights which the white man is bound to respect, but others which he is privileged to ignore. This moral revolution must create a new heart and renew the right spirit. All the rights of every man must be respected by every other man. It is needless to attempt to formulate in detail the particular forms which this reconstruction will take. If the spirit of democracy prevail, the statutes, articles, and clauses will take care of themselves.



## THE AFRICAN COLONIES

The future government of the African colonies will form a chapter in the new reconstruction of greatest interest and concern to the American Negro. During the past four hundred years the European has been brought into contact with the African. But the one motive has been exploitation of the weak for the aggrandizement of the strong. The poet Pope has embalmed the deep infamy of motive which has dominated the European in his contact with the weaker breeds of men. Lo the poor Indian is described as seeking release from it all, in his happy hunting grounds beyond the skies,

“Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No thieves torment, no Christians thirst for gold.”

But a new note has been uttered. The beneficence of democracy is extending even to the man farthest down. The enlightened statesmen have united in declaring that, hereafter colonies must be governed in the interest of the people themselves, and not for the aggrandizement of their exploiters. The haughty Germans, relying on the ancient dogma of divine right, have ruthlessly ruled the African colonies with iron efficiency, with sole reference to gain. It is agreed on all sides that these colonies must be taken over by the Allies in the interest of humanity. They are to be governed, as far as practicable, on the basis of self determination. The United States is under heavy moral obligation to the African continent and its people. Under the spell of the old dogma, America reached out her long arm across the sea and captured helpless African victims and subjected them to cruel bondage. The Peace Conference will be confronted with the question of requiting the historic wrong of one nation against the other; but America can never requite the Indian whose land she despoiled and whose race she extinguished; nor yet the African, whose simple souled sons and daughters were snatched from their native land and made to labor for centuries in requited soil. But the adjustment of grievances of French against German, and Italian against Austrian, suggests the deep moral obligation to this helpless and expatriated people. The United States represents the highest type of democracy among the nations. Democracy will never justify itself

as a world influence unless it can be becomingly related to the backward and belated peoples of the world in such a way as will lead to their speedy development and reclamation. Indeed the immediate, persistent problem of civilization is the satisfactory adjustment of the advanced sections of the human race to their less fortunate fellow men. The infamy which has hitherto characterized this relationship, stands in everlasting discredit against the claims of Christianity and civilization. While the Constitution of the United States does not bestow authority of government over subject races and peoples, nevertheless, we have taken over Hawaii, Porto Rico and the Philippines on the ground of national necessity and benevolent assimilation. The United States is under both moral and political obligation to assume responsibility for the future welfare of the African colonies taken from Germany for reasons of humanity. It might be well for the United States to assume complete responsibility over a section of the German colonies as an example to the world of how a backward people can be governed without exploitation, and lifted to higher planes of civilization under the guidance of the democratic spirit. This government would naturally enough utilize the talents and attainments of its Afro-American element to help sympathetically in the government and development of their African kinsmen.

### SELF DETERMINATION

No people, however lowly and backward, can be effectively governed without an element of self determination is involved in their government. There are ten million Americans of African descent in the United States. They have naturally a vital interest in the welfare of their motherland. The Afro-American, on the whole, constitutes the most advanced section of the African race to be found anywhere in the world. He is best qualified to utter the voice of two-hundred million black people in the continent of Africa and scattered over the face of the globe.

### RACE LEADERSHIP

All true leadership must be autochthonous. It must spring from the midst of those to be led. The real leader must be of

the same blood and sympathies and subjected to the same conditions and linked to the same destiny as his followers. No race can speak for another or give utterance to its striving of soul. Before an individual of one class can assume to be spokesman for another, he must forego his former allegiance and naturalize himself in the class for which he aspires to speak. He must leave the one, and cleave to the other. Should a conflict arise between the two, he must eschew the old and espouse the new. Napoleon Bonaparte was by blood an Italian. He became not only the mouthpiece but the oracle of the French people; but he must first become a Frenchman by adoption. The white man is not disposed to become naturalized in the Negro race, nor to forego the privilege and prestige which his class and color confer. The Kaiser is the most detested white man on the face of the earth today. And yet the Anglo-Saxon *amour propre* would revolt against the suggestion of subjecting him to the humiliating conditions which without compunction of conscience it forces upon the Negro.

### THE LIMIT OF PHILANTHROPY

In the days of slavery when the black man's tongue was tied, noble champions arose to plead his cause. The voices of Phillips, Garrison and Sumner ringing with righteous indignation, quickened the conscience of the nation. This race can never repay the debt of gratitude for this vicarious service. But the slave has been made a freeman. His sons and daughters have been taught the art of disquisition and persuasive appeal. The black man must now plead with his own voice and give tongue to his own complaints. The white man can yet do much to champion the cause of the Negro, and to arouse the conscience of his own race against injustice and wrong heaped upon the defenseless head of the weak and helpless people. Altruistic advocacy, however genuine, fails to arouse desired response in public feeling and judgment. The people who fail to produce their own spokesman can hardly convince the world that they feel a deep seated sense of injustice and wrong. The man who feels the wound must utter the groan. Although the retained advocate may have a genuine interest in the welfare of his clients, the persuasive power of his plea is weakened by the thought that his own destiny is not involved in the ver-

dict. It was necessary that Moses should be one in flesh and blood and spirit with the oppressed people of Israel, to qualify him to stand before the court of Pharaoh, and plead their cause with plenary power and unimpeachable moral authority.

## THE VOICE OF THE NEGRO

The white man, with amazing assumption of wisdom and goodness, has undertaken to set the proper regime for the Negro without consulting his advice or consent. The all-wise physician disdains inquiry of the patient of the nature of his ailment. But experience proves that the civilized man is not enlightened enough to govern the savage; that the saint is not sanctified enough to govern the sinner; the philosopher is not wise enough to govern the fool, without involving the consent and participation of the one to be governed. John Locke was a keen expert in the workings of human understanding, and yet he was unable to draft a satisfactory constitution for the people of South Carolina. It is now conceded that the European, with all of his assumed power, has woefully failed in establishing efficient and satisfactory government of weaker races and peoples. This failure has been in proportion to his neglect to consult the interest and feelings of those to be governed. There can be no good government where the principle of self government is not involved and invoked.

The Negro represents one-eighth of the population of the globe. The Peace Conference now sitting at Paris has assumed the function of the Parliament of Man. The common sense of most must hold the fretful world in awe. All classes and races with just grievances to be remedied or wrongs to be righted are seeking a hearing before this tribunal of law, justice and peace. The laboring men throughout the world, the Irish, the Jews, dissatisfied elements of every race and class, are demanding a hearing through voices of their own choosing. Shall not the voice of the Negro be heard and heeded, if the world is to establish an enduring peace or equality and righteousness?

## THE NEW RECONSTRUCTION

The United States belongs to the victorious nations, and is not subject to technical reconstruction. Our whole fabric, how-

ever, economic, political, social and moral, will be transformed by the new democratic spirit. The Negro need not expect to be made the subject of special legislation, but may expect to be included in the program of social justice and human opportunity. Proscriptive and restrictive regulations will be nullified under the mollifying influence of these ideals.

## RIGHTS AND FIGHTS.

The Negro represents a minority in the midst of a more powerful and populous people; but unlike minority races in the Balkan States, he does not hope to win his cause by primary conflict. He must rely upon the essential righteousness of his claim and the aroused moral sense of the nation. He is a coward who will not exert his resistive power to its utmost for the unlimited enjoyment of every right which God or man has conferred upon him. There are certain God-given rights which man may be mean enough to deny but never can be mighty enough to take away. The contest which the Negro must wage incessantly and unceasingly is not a conflict that would result in the destruction of the social fabric of which he forms a part, but would rather lead to the fulfillment of its declared aims and ideals. The Negro's cause is right, and right must finally win. The devils believe this, and tremble.

## STATES RIGHTS

As a striking result of this new reconstruction, the old doctrine of state rights, which had its origin in the purpose to subordinate the Negro and perpetuate his inferior status, will be wiped away. This reactionary doctrine has stood athwart every great moral reform which our nation has undergone. It opposed unity of the nation and the freedom of the slave. It sought to defeat prohibition and women's claim for the suffrage. Provincialism has been the bane of our national life. The Civil War created a new nation with dominant powers over the states. The world war will create a new world whose sanction will transcend that of any nation. Great reform movements, now sweeping through the world and the nation, will benefit all of the people, and no race or class can be shunted from the benefits thereof.

## THE OLD RECONSTRUCTION AND THE NEW

The reconstruction growing out of the Civil War resulted in adding the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. The 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery and giving the Negro his freedom, is universally accepted and uncontested. The 14th and 15th Amendments, which made the Negro a citizen and clothed him with the elective franchise, have never been accepted in all parts of the nation. The refractory states have in a large measure nullified the intended effect of these Amendments. But the new reconstruction through which we are now passing must complete the work of the old, so that in truth and in deed, as well as in word and phrase, "There shall be no discrimination on account of race or color."

The failure of the old reconstruction, in so far as it may be so considered, was due to the fact that it never met with the unanimous acceptance of the American people, but was forced by one section upon the unwilling acquiescence of the other. The new reconstruction, on the other hand, must meet with the unanimous consent of the American people, North and South East and West. What American dares rise up and say nay, to the demands of democracy?

## GOVERNMENT BASED ON INEQUALITY.

Alexander Stephens, the vice-president of the Confederacy, stated in his inaugural address, that the Confederate States would attempt to found a government based frankly upon human inequality. For four long years the bloody struggle raged around this issue. Strange to relate, the world war waged upon the survival of the same issue, lasted for the same duration of time. The Confederate cause was lost. The German cause has been lost. Any cause that openly advocates human inequality is bound to be lost under the assault of democratic ideals. By the irony of history, the political heirs and assigns of the advocates of government based upon inequality are now in control of the affairs of this nation, when it is committed most unequivocally to the doctrine of government based frankly upon human equality. Woodrow Wilson is now spokesman for democracy, not merely for this nation but



for all nations. It may be said, in homely phrase, that the South is in the saddle, but she is riding a democratic horse which is headed to the goal of human equality. She must ride straight or dismount.

## REACTION

Reactionary voices here and there may be expected to rise, but they will be drowned in the triumphant course of democracy. Over-buoyant expectation may meet with disappointment. Negro soldiers, returning from across the seas with laurels of victory, may here and there be made to feel the sting of rebuff and insult by the very people whose liberties they fought to secure. Intense local animosities may be engendered in one place or another. Outbreaks and murder may spasmodically occur. A comprehensive understanding of the far-reaching effect of forward movements must discount all this. Black laws followed the 13th Amendment. The Ku Klux Klan came after reconstruction. There was a recrudescence of race prejudice after the Spanish-American War, in which the Negro had played a glorious part. These are but backwaters in the current of democracy. The tide is now at flood and cannot be stemmed. Already the most conspicuous opponents of democracy, for fear it might include the Negro, with dying gasp of defiance, have been driven from places of public power under the excoriating lash of President Wilson, Southerner. The logic of events overrides the narrow purposes of men. The sign of democracy is written across the sky, in letters so bold and pronounced, that he who runs may read; and those who are too foolish to read will be compelled to run.

## RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

The Negro must not be allowed to make the same mistake in the new reconstruction that he was permitted to make in the old. All of his energies were focused upon the issue of political rights and privileges with little or no reserved power for economic and industrial advancement. Could Booker T. Washington have come upon the stage a generation earlier, preaching the doctrine of industry, thrift and economy alongside of Frederick Douglass, proclaiming in thunderous tones the gospel of human rights, the advancement of the race

would have been built upon a foundation that could not be shaken. The desired product involves both factors. In this new day, the Negro must place equal emphasis upon rights and duties. He must deserve all that he demands, and demand all that he deserves.

### SELF RECLAMATION.

The government can only give the individual a fair chance. The race, he must run himself. No trick or contrivance of government can ennoble the Negro beyond the level of his work and worth. When democracy prevails, the upward struggle has just begun. Soil, sunshine, and moisture may abound, but the seed must send its own roots into the soil, and its blades into the air by the push of its own potency.

War energizes the powers, and liberalizes the faculties of man. In the wake of war, reconstruction always builds mightier structures than those that have been torn down. The United States is on the threshold of a mighty economic, educational, and moral awakening. The worker will feel a new zest, the thinker will have a new thought, and the poet will sing a new song. Opportunities will be open to every competent and willing worker for the best development and exercise of his highest powers and attainments. The Negro must contribute his bit and his best to the general welfare, and derive his just share from it. He must enter as a competent and willing participant in the new issues of life, and must not fail to help promote the glory of that new freedom whose beneficiary he devoutly hopes to be.